

## Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1969

INFO USMISSION GENEVA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTEVIDEO 3092

TAGS: ILO, PORG, UY, ELAB

SUBJECT: ILO AND URUGUAY

REFS: A) STATE 130497, B) MONTEVIDEO 1925, C) STATE 186432  
(NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: THE MINISTER OF LABOR HAS ASKED THE EMBASSY FOR INFORMATION ON THE US POSITION IN THE ILO CONCERNING TRADE UNION FREEDOM IN URUGUAY. THE GOU, HAS, SINCE OUTLAWING THE COMMUNIST DOMINATED LABOR CENTRAL IN 1973, BEEN UNDER HEAVY ATTACK FROM TYU COMMUNISTS IN THE ILO. IN NOVEMBER 1976 THE GOVERNING BODY REPORTEDLY WILL TAKE UP THE URUGUAYAN CASE. THE EMBASSY REQUESTS THAT THE DEPARTMENT REVIEW THE MATTER AND ADVISE. END SUMMARY

2. LABATT MET WITH MINISTER OF LABOR AUGUST 16 TO DISCUSS USG APPRAISAL JUNE 1976 ILO CONFERENCES. MINISTER REITERATED THAT GOU SHARES OUR CONCERNS. THE MINISTER, HOWEVER, IMMEDIATELY RAISED A MAJOR PROBLEM THAT GOU HAS WITH THE ILO. REFERRING TO AN EARLIER DISPOSITION IN  
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WHICH LABATT ASKED GOU (PER REFTTEL A, PARA 9) "TO EXAMINE

REASONS WHY IT PARTICIPATES IN THE ILO ETC.," MINISTER  
ASKED POINT BLANK WHAT POSITION USG INTENDED TO TAKE WHEN  
THE QUESTION OF TRADE WITH  
FREEDOM IN URUGUAY IS RAISED  
AT THE ILO GOVERNING BODY MEETING TO BE HELD IN NOVEMBER  
1976.

3. BY WAY OF BACKGROUND, URUGUAY HAS BEEN UNDER ATTACK  
IN ILO FOR LACK OF TRADE UNION FREEDOM SINCE IT DECLARED  
THE COMMUNIST-CONTROLLED NATIONAL WORKERS CONVENTION (CNT)  
ILLEGAL IN JUNE 1973. SINCE THAT TIME THE CNT, SOME OF  
ITS AFFILIATED UNIONS, THE WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE  
UNIONS (WFTU), AND THE WORLD CONFEDERATION OF LABOR (WCL)  
HAVE LAUNCHED A BARRAGE OF COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE GOU. AS  
A RESULT OF THESE COMPLAINTS, THE ILO COMMITTEE ON FREEDOM  
OF ASSOCIATION RECOMMENDED THAT THE GOVERNING BODY REQUEST  
GOU APPROVAL FOR THE APPOINTMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL  
OF A REPRESENTATIVE TO EXAMINE IN URUGUAY THE FACTS  
RELATING TO THE COMPLAINTS AND TO REPORT THE FINDINGS TO  
THE COMMITTEE. THE GOVERNING BODY ACCEPTED THE RECOMMENDATION  
AND THE GOU AGREED TO RECEIVE THE REPRESENTATIVE. THE  
DIRECTOR-GENERAL APPOINTED DR. PHILIPPE CAHIER TO CARRY  
OUT THE INSPECTION WHICH WAS CONDUCTED IN URUGUAY FROM  
JUNE 20 TO JULY 1, 1975.

4. IN NOVEMBER 1975 THE COMMITTEE ON FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION  
ISSUED A REPORT BASED ON THE CAHIER MISSION WHICH INCLUDED A  
NUMBER OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND REQUESTED THAT THEY BE CALLED  
TO THE ATTENTION OF THE GOU BY THE GOVERNING BODY. THE  
EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT THE GOVERNING BODY ACCEPTED THESE  
RECOMMENDATIONS AND OFFICIALLY INFORMED THE GOU OF THEIR  
CONTENT.

5. AS FAR AS WE KNOW, THE GOU DID NOT RESPOND TO THE  
RECOMMENDATIONS. THE LABOR MINISTER TOLD LABATT THAT  
THE GOU HAD INTENDED TO TAKE SOME ACTION PROPOSING  
REVISED LABOR LEGISLATION LATE IN 1975 OR EARLY IN 1976.  
THE OPPORTUNITY WAS LOST, HE SAID, WHEN DURING THE SAME  
TIME FRAME AN ELABORATE MILITARY APPARATUS OF THE COMMUNIST  
PARTY OF URUGUAY WAS DISCOVERED. THE CNT WAS ALSO IMPLICATED  
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IN THE AFFAIR AND VLADIMIR TURIANSKY, A HIGH CNT OFFICIAL  
OPERATING CLADESTINELY, WAS ARRESTED FOR HIS PART IN THE  
SCHEME. THUS, THE GOU NEEDED FURTHER TIME TO STUDY THE  
IMPLICATION OF THIS DISCOVERY. A FEW MONTHS LATER,  
URUGUAY'S INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION DETERIORATED.  
PRESIDENT BORDABERRY WAS DEPOSED, AND INTERIM PRESIDENT  
APPOINTED, AND A SUCCESSOR CHOSEN TO TAKE OFFICE ON  
SEPTEMBER 1, 1976. DURING THIS PERIOD ATTENTION TO LABOR

MATTERS WAS OF LOW PRIORITY. THE LABOR MINISTER SAYS, HOWEVER, THAT LABOR LEGISLATION WILL HAVE HIGH PRIORITY IN THE NEW REGIME.

6. THE EMBASSY HAS STATED, ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS, THAT TRADE UNION FREEDOM IN URUGUAY IS LIMITED. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE OF ORGANIZATIONS WHICH WERE OR ARE DOMINATED BY COMMUNISTS. THE GOU HAS NO INTENTION OF ALLOWING THOSE ORGANIZATIONS TO FUNCTION UNDER COMMUNIST CONTROL. THE GOVERNMENT DOES, NEVERTHELESS, EXPRESS A DESIRE TO HAVE A TRADE UNION MOVEMENT WITHOUT THE COMMUNISTS. THEREFORE, ANY NEW LABOR LEGISLATION WHICH IS LIKELY TO EMERGE WILL MOST LIKELY CONTAIN RESTRICTION ON POLITICAL ACTIVITY AND PARTICULARLY ON POLITICAL ACTIVITY WHICH IS CONSIDERED SUBVERSIVE BY THE GOU. BECAUSE OF THESE PROBABLE RESTRICTIONS, THE COMPLAINTS ARE LIKELY TO CONTINUE.

7. THE GOU CONSIDERS THE ATTACK ON IT AS LARGELY POLITICALLY MOTIVATED, INSTIGATED BY THE CNT, WHICH THEY CONSIDER AS A COMMUNIST ORGANIZATION, AND THE WCTU, WHICH IS ONE, AND WHICH IS LED BY ENRIQUE PASTORINO, A WELL-KNOWN URUGUAYAN COMMUNIST. THE GOU INTERNALIZES MANY OF THE PROBLEMS OF THE ILO WHICH WE MIGHT SEE IN A DIFFERENT LIGHT. WHEN WE SPEAK OF THE EROSION OF TRIPARTISM AND THE IMPORTANCE OF NOT ELECTING COMMUNISTS TO IMPORTANT POSITIONS IN THE CONFERENCES, THE GOU FULLY AGREES BECAUSE IT BELIEVES THAT THE COMMUNIST UNIONS HERE WERE, IN FACT, APPENDAGES OF THE PARTY, INTENT ON SUBVERTING THE GOVERNMENT, AND NOT TRULY REPRESENTATIVE OF THE WORKERS. AND, WHEN WE EXPRESS OUR CONCERN WITH THE DOUBLE STANDARD, I.E., "FAILURE OF ILO CONFERENCE TO CITE SOME COUNTRIES (SUCH AS USSR) FOR VIOLATIONS OF ILO CONVENTION 87 CONCERNING FREEDOM

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OF ASSOCIATION" AND "SELECTIVE CONCERN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS", (REF A) GOU LEADERS ARE IN COMPLETE AGREEMENT. URUGUAY NOW SEES ITSELF AND CHILE AS BEING SINGLED OUT FOR INVESTIGATION WITH WHAT IT BELIEVES FOR LARGELY POLITICAL MOTIVES. THEIR SUSPICIONS ARE STRENGTHENED IN THEIR VIEW SINCE YEARS AND DECADES HAVE PASSED WITHOUT SIMILAR ACTION BEING TAKEN WITH REGARD TO THE COMMUNIST COUNTRIES. WHILE URUGUAY HAS LONG BEEN A SUPPORTER OF THE ILO AND ITS PROGRAMS, IT IS NOW, LIKE THE US, REASSESSING ITS COMMITMENT TO THE ORGANIZATION. WE BELIEVE THIS ATTITUDE RESULTS IN PART FROM OUR HARD-LINE STAND ON REFORM AND OUR THREAT TO WITHDRAW. THUS, THE GOU LEGITIMATELY CAN ASK HOW WE STAND ON THIS ISSUE OF CONCERN TO THEM. OUR RESPONSE MAY WELL SHAPE ITS ATTITUDES TOWARDS COOPERATING

IN OUR EFFORT TO REFORM THE ILO.

8. ACTION REQUESTED: IN ORDER TO CONTINUE OUR DIALOG WITH THE GOU ON THE ILO AND RESPOND TO ITS REQUEST FOR INFORMATION, THE EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE THE DEPARTMENT REVIEWING THE URUGUAYAN CASE IN THE LIGHT OF OUR POSITION VIS-A-VIS THE ILO AND ADVISING HOW TO RESPOND. THE LATEST ILO REPORT AVAILABLE TO THE EMBASSY ON THE URUGUAYAN CASE IS IN ILO DOCUMENT G.B. 198/11/13, 198TH SESSION, GENEVA, NOVEMBER 1975. SIRACUSA

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